



TITLE:

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CITATION:

Xiong, Qi-lin ...[et al]. Effect of Crystal Orientation on Femtosecond Laser-Induced Thermomechanical Responses and Spallation Behaviors of Copper Films. Scientific Reports 2017, 7: 9218.

ISSUE DATE:

2017-08-23

URL:

<http://hdl.handle.net/2433/228129>

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SCIENTIFIC REPORTS

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Effect of Crystal Orientation on Femtosecond Laser-Induced Thermomechanical Responses and Spallation Behaviors of Copper Films

Qi-lin Xiong^{1,2}, Zhenhuan Li^{1,2} & Takayuki Kitamura³

Ultrafast thermomechanical responses and spallation behaviours of monocrystal copper films irradiated by femtosecond laser pulse are investigated using molecular dynamics simulation (MDS). Films with $\langle 100 \rangle$, $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ crystal orientations along the thickness direction were studied. The results show that the crystal orientation has a significant effect on femtosecond laser-induced thermomechanical responses and spallation behaviors of monocrystal copper films. The discrepancy between normal stresses in copper films with different crystal orientation leads to distinct differences in lattice temperature. Moreover, the copper films with different crystal orientations present distinct spallation behaviors, including structural melting (atomic splashing) and fracture. The melting depth of $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film is lower than that of $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films for the same laser intensity. The dislocations and slip bands are formed and propagate from the solid-liquid interface of $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films, while these phenomena do not appear in $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. Additionally, numerous slip bands are generated in the non-irradiated surface region of copper films due to reflection of mechanical stress. These slip bands can finally evolve into cracks (nanovoids) with time, which further result in the fracture of the entire films.

Femtosecond laser processing of metal is attracting increasing attention of researchers due to its high machining efficiency and high precision machining on metal^{1–4}. To achieve high precision machining of metal, a profound understanding of thermomechanical interaction between femtosecond laser and metal is indispensable. A great deal of research on femtosecond laser-metal interaction has been carried out in the past years. Due to extremely high temperatures and strain rates induced by femtosecond laser pulse, the thermophysical properties of materials, which usually measured experimentally at room temperature, are out of the reach of continuum mechanics⁵ in such extreme situations. However, these extreme situations can be simulated by molecular dynamics simulation (MDS) because MDS can take into account the temperature and strain rate-dependent thermophysical properties of materials. Under these circumstances MDS has been widely adopted to study the ultrafast thermomechanical interaction in the metal induced by ultrashort laser. For instance, Huang and Lai⁶ studied femtosecond laser induced nucleation and propagation of dislocations in the copper film with $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientation along thickness direction using MDS. Gan and Chen⁷ investigated the ultrafast nonthermal ablation of gold nanofilms with $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientation along thickness direction using MDS. They found that the film thickness has a significant influence on the evolution process of the stress wave. Xiong *et al.*^{8,9} used MD simulation to investigate the electron relaxation effect on femtosecond laser-induced thermoelastic response of gold films with $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientation along thickness direction and the effect of femtosecond laser trains on

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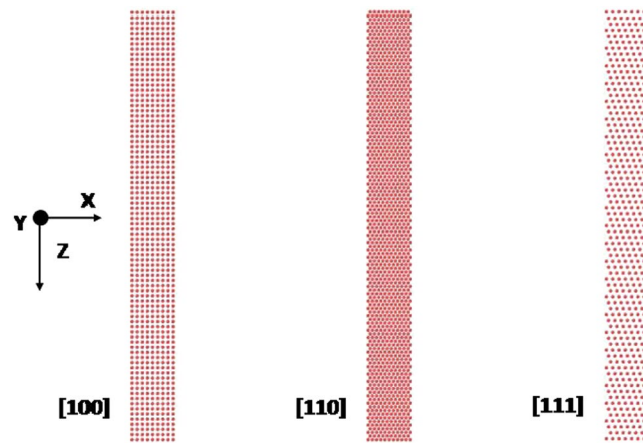


Figure 1. Atomic models of copper films with $\langle 100 \rangle$, $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ crystal orientation along thickness direction.

ultrafast thermomechanical responses of a $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. Their results illustrated that the electron relaxation effect can be neglected when the laser duration is much longer than the electron thermal relaxation time; but it becomes significant if the laser duration matches the electron relaxation time, especially when the former is much shorter than the latter.

Since the interactions between atoms are strongly affected by the distance between atoms in a single crystal material, the material parameter of the single crystal material varies with the crystal orientation^{10,11}. Thus, it is very important to find out how the crystal orientation influences the ultrafast thermomechanical responses and spallation behaviors of material for application of femtosecond laser processing in engineering. Unfortunately, only the single crystal metal film with $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientation along thickness direction is used to investigate femtosecond laser-metal interaction in the existing studies⁶⁻⁹. Few works about the influence of crystal orientation on ultrafast thermomechanical responses and spallation behaviors of single crystal metal during femtosecond laser heating has been reported up to now.

The main aim of the present work is to study the effect of crystal orientation on ultrafast thermomechanical responses and spallation behaviors of monocrystal copper films irradiated by femtosecond laser pulse. Films with thickness orientations along the typical $\langle 100 \rangle$, $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ crystallographic directions are simulated using MDS. The results reveal that the crystal orientation has a significant effect on femtosecond laser-induced thermomechanical responses of copper films. Due to thermo-mechanical coupling interaction, the discrepancy between normal stresses in copper films with different crystal orientation leads to distinct differences in lattice temperature. The spallation behaviors, including structural melting (atomic splashing), generation of void and fracture of copper films, are different for films with different crystal orientations. Specifically, the melting part of $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film will not fly away from the shallow surface region at 0.2 ns, while for its $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ counterparts the melting parts can fly away from the surface at about 0.15 ns, which indicates that, compared with $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films, it is more difficult to ablate $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. The size of voids generated in melting subsurface of $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films is larger than that in $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. The dislocation and slip band are formed and propagate from the solid-liquid interface for $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films. In addition, lots of slip bands are generated in the non-irradiated surface region of copper films due to mechanical stress. The slip bands in $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film disappear when stress wave passes; however, these slip bands are developed into cracks (nanovoids), which finally result in fracture of copper films.

Process of MD Simulation

To study the effect of crystal orientation on ultrafast thermo-mechanical coupling responses and spallation behaviors of monocrystal copper films, three MD models of thin copper films are created: i) a monocrystal copper target with the $\langle 100 \rangle$, $\langle 010 \rangle$ and $\langle 001 \rangle$ crystal orientations along the x-, y- and z-directions, respectively, which has a size of $15.2 \text{ nm} \times 15.2 \text{ nm} \times 455.5 \text{ nm}$ and possesses 8.68 million atoms as shown in Fig. (1); ii) a monocrystal copper target with the $\langle 1\bar{1}1 \rangle$, $\langle 1\bar{1}2 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ crystal orientations along the x-, y- and z-directions, respectively, whose size is $15.0 \text{ nm} \times 15.0 \text{ nm} \times 451.6 \text{ nm}$; iii) a monocrystal copper target with the $\langle -110 \rangle$, $\langle -1\bar{1}2 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ crystal orientations along the x-, y- and z-directions, respectively, whose size is $15.0 \text{ nm} \times 15.0 \text{ nm} \times 451.6 \text{ nm}$. According to the previous studies¹², the cross-sectional size of $15 \text{ nm} \times 15 \text{ nm}$ size is adopted to avoid significant effects of periodic boundaries on the dislocation nucleation dynamics. In addition, for the $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films, the cross-sectional sizes (x-y plane) are slightly adjusted in order to achieve the perfect periodic boundary conditions.

The ultrafast thermo-mechanical interaction between femtosecond laser and thin copper film is investigated using the combined hyperbolic two-temperature theory (HTTM)¹³ and MD model¹⁴ in the present work. The HTTM-MD model is described as follows:

HTTM:

$$C_e(T_e) \frac{\partial T_e}{\partial t} = -\frac{\partial q_e}{\partial z} - G(T_e, T_l)(T_e - T_l) + Q(z, t) \quad (1)$$

$$\tau_e(T_e, T_l) \frac{\partial q_e}{\partial t} + q_e = -k_e(T_e, T_l) \frac{\partial T_e}{\partial z} \quad (2)$$

Here $Q(z, t)$ is the Gaussian laser heat source, which describes the laser-material interaction by the following distribution of femtosecond laser energy along z direction:

$$Q(z, t) = \sqrt{\frac{\beta}{\pi}} \frac{J_0(1-R)}{t_p z_s} \exp \left[-\left(\frac{z}{z_s} \right)^2 - \beta \left(\frac{t}{t_p} - 2 \right)^2 \right] \quad (3)$$

Here R is the reflectivity, J_0 is the peak intensity, $J_0(1-R)$ is the absorbed laser fluence, t_p is the laser duration and z_s is the optical penetration depth of copper. In the present study, $t_p = 100$ fs. The simulation of the femtosecond laser-material interaction starts at $t = 0$, the peak laser energy injection is located at $t = 2t_p$, $\beta = 4 \ln 2$, and $z_s = 14$ nm for the laser wavelength between 10 nm and 250 nm is used in the simulations¹⁵.

MD:

$$m_i \frac{d^2 r_i}{dt^2} = F_i(U_{ij}) + \zeta m_i v_i^T \quad (4)$$

where the coupling coefficient in the Newton equation is given by

$$\zeta = \frac{1/n \sum_{k=1}^n G V_N (T_e^k - T_l)}{\sum_i m_i (v_i^T)^2} \quad (5)$$

Here v_i^T denotes the velocity of atom i excluding the velocity of mass center of the cell (or thermal velocity); $F_i(U_{ij})$ is the forces exerted on atom i due to the interaction between atoms; V_N is the volume of the cell; T_e^k is the average electron temperature at the k th time step of finite difference (FD); \sum_i is the number of atoms in the volume V_N .

Large-Scale Atomic Molecular Massively Parallel Simulator (LAMMPS)¹⁶ is used to perform all MD simulations; the OVITO¹⁷ is used to realize the visualization of atomic structure. In MD simulations, periodic boundary condition is applied in the in-plane direction of film (i.e., x - y plane) and the free boundary condition is assigned to the thickness direction (i.e., z -direction). The simulation technique of the HTTM-MD model described in the existing study^{8,9} is employed in the present work. The thermo physical parameters of copper used in MD simulations are taken from the literature^{9,15}.

The embedded atom method (EAM) potential¹⁸ is adopted in the present MD simulations for the interactions between atoms. The EAM potential energy of atom i is described as follows:

$$E_i = F_\alpha \left(\sum_{j \neq i} \rho_\beta(r_{ij}) \right) + \frac{1}{2} \sum_{j \neq i} \phi_{\alpha\beta}(r_{ij}) \quad (6)$$

where F_α is the embedding energy function of the electron density $\rho_\beta(r_{ij})$, $\phi_{\alpha\beta}$ is a pair potential function and α, β denotes the element types of atoms i and j , respectively. The virial stress¹⁹⁻²¹ is applied in the present study, which is computed by

$$\sigma_{\alpha\beta} = -1/V \left(\sum_i p'_\alpha p'_\beta / m^i + \sum_i \sum_{j>1} r_{\alpha\beta}^{ij} f_{\beta}^{ij} \right) \quad (7)$$

where p'_α, p'_β are the momentums of atom i in the α - and β -coordinate directions, $r_{\alpha\beta}^{ij}$ is the component of the position vector between atoms i and j in the α -direction, f_{β}^{ij} is the component of the force vector on atom i due to atom j in the β -direction, V is the volume of current cell.

Results and Discussion

Effect of Crystal Orientation on Femtosecond Laser-Induced Thermomechanical Responses.

In order to clearly show the contents of figures, only results of $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films are presented in figures. Figure 2 demonstrates temperature distribution in $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at the time of 10 ps, 30 ps, 50 ps and 80 ps. Lattice temperature of surface region of $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films decreases gradually with the time as shown in Fig. 2 owing to the fact that the energy of the atomic system is transferred to a deep position through collision interaction between lattices. Additionally, an apparent bump always presents in lattice temperature, whose mechanism has been discussed in the previous studies^{8,9}. Thermomechanical coupling interaction between stress (mechanical field) and temperature (thermal field) leads to this interesting phenomenon.

Before 80 ps, the region where the temperature is higher than the melting point (1357 K) of copper extends as time increases. At ~ 80 ps, the melting depth reaches its maximum value and does not extend to deeper region

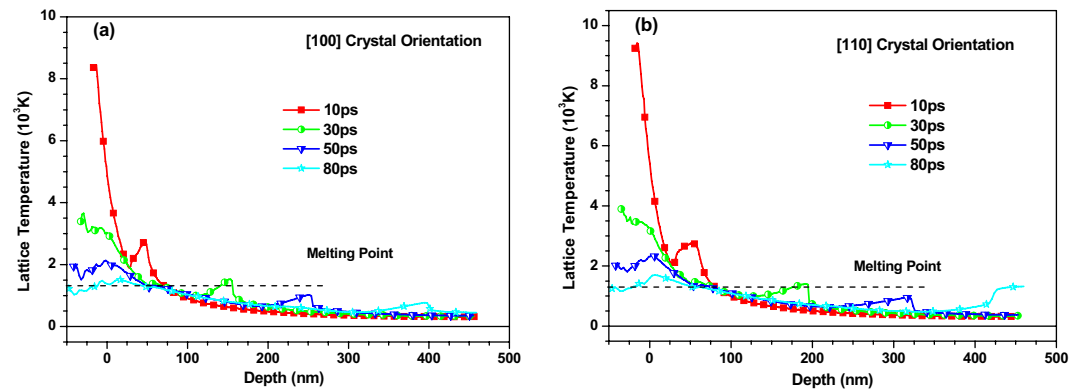


Figure 2. Temperature distribution of (a) $\langle 100 \rangle$ and (b) $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 10 ps, 30 ps, 50 ps and 80 ps time instant.

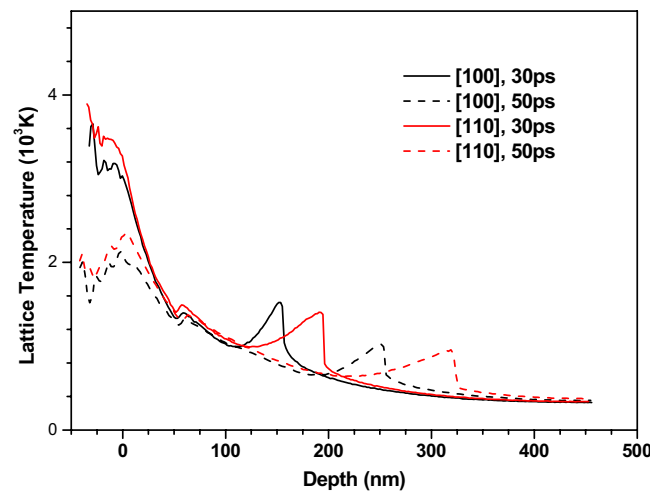


Figure 3. The contrast of temperature distributions of $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 30 ps and 50 ps time instant.

with the increase of time. The estimated melting depths are about 50 nm and 60 nm for $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films, respectively, which is close to the experimental results²². To show the effect of crystal orientation on lattice temperature, the temperature distributions of $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser with the same intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 30 ps and 50 ps is shown in Fig. 3. Lattice temperature in $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film is found to be slightly higher than that in $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. However, the positions of lattice temperature peak show significant difference between $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films, which can be attributed to the fact that the propagation speed of the bump in $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film is greater than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. The reason leading to different propagation speeds of the bump in $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films will be explained by the following stress analysis.

Figures 4 and 5 depict the normal stress distribution in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 10 ps, 30 ps, 50 ps, 60 ps, 80 ps, 120 ps and 160 ps, respectively. At 10 ps, there is a compressive stress formed near the top surface which is irradiated by femtosecond laser. The sharp rise of lattice temperature in the surface region of thin film due to femtosecond laser heating results in seriously unbalanced lattice temperature distribution as shown in Figs 2 and 3. Such a unbalanced lattice temperature distribution further causes ultrafast deformation of thin film and thus limits the deformation inside thin film, which leads to the sharp compressive stress. As time increases, the material near the irradiated surface is stretched due to thermal expansion. Meanwhile, the tensile stress appears in the irradiated surface as shown in Fig. 4. The maximum stress of $\sim 36.0 \text{ GPa}$ in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ thin film under the laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 is slightly lower than that in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ thin film. It is worth noting that the stress wave propagates at an invariable speed. After dividing the time interval into the dimensional interval the propagation speed of the stress wave is estimated to be about 5000 m/s and 6600 m/s for the $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films, respectively.

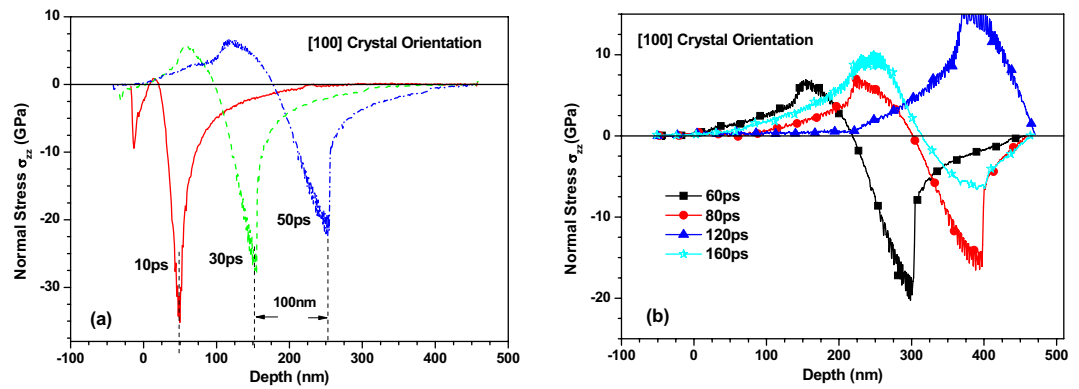


Figure 4. Normal stress (σ_{zz}) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm² at 10–160 ps time instant.

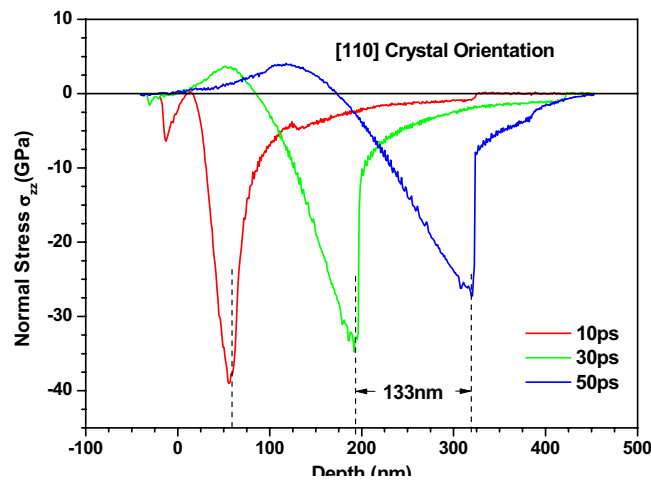


Figure 5. Normal stress (σ_{zz}) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm² at 10–50 ps time instant.

According to the thermal stress theory of continuum mechanics²³, the coefficient δ of coupling between thermal (lattice temperature) and mechanical (deformation) is given as follows:

$$\delta \propto \frac{\alpha^2 E}{\rho c_\sigma} \quad (8)$$

where

$$c_\sigma = c_\rho + \frac{\alpha^2 T_0 E}{\rho} \quad (9)$$

Here, c_ρ is specific heat at constant strain, α is thermal expansion coefficient, E is elastic modulus, ρ is mass density. The coupling parameter is a function of thermal expansion coefficient, elastic modulus and so on. The thermal expansion coefficient of copper is significantly dependent on the crystal orientation²⁴. Specifically, the thermal expansion coefficient of $\langle 110 \rangle$ orientation is greater than that of $\langle 100 \rangle$ orientation. The tensile stress-strain curves for $\langle 110 \rangle$ orientation and $\langle 100 \rangle$ orientation are plotted in Fig. 6. By calculating the slope of the linear part in Fig. 6, we find that the elastic modulus in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ orientation is higher than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ orientation, which is consistent with the conclusion of the previous study²⁵. Since the mass density and specific heat are assumed to be orientation-independent, thermo-mechanical coupling in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ orientation is stronger than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ orientation according to a simple mathematical estimation. This result indicates that under the same laser intensity, the mechanical response (stress) induced in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ orientation is greater than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ orientation. The phenomenon shown in Figs 4 and 5 can thus be well explained based on this finding.

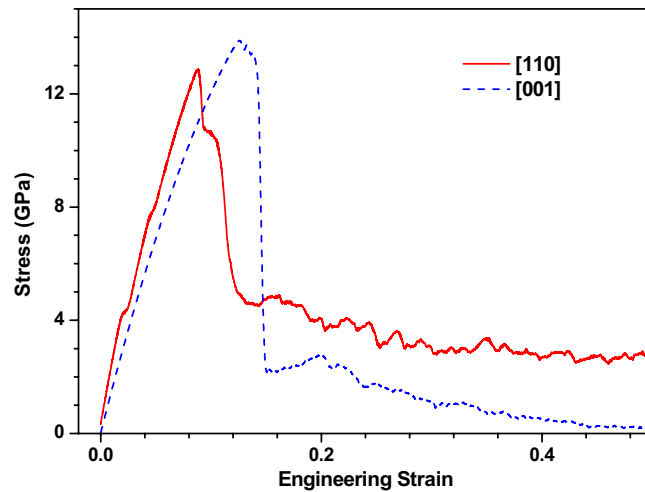


Figure 6. Stress-strain curves of $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientations under the tensile strain rate of 10^9s^{-1} at room temperature.

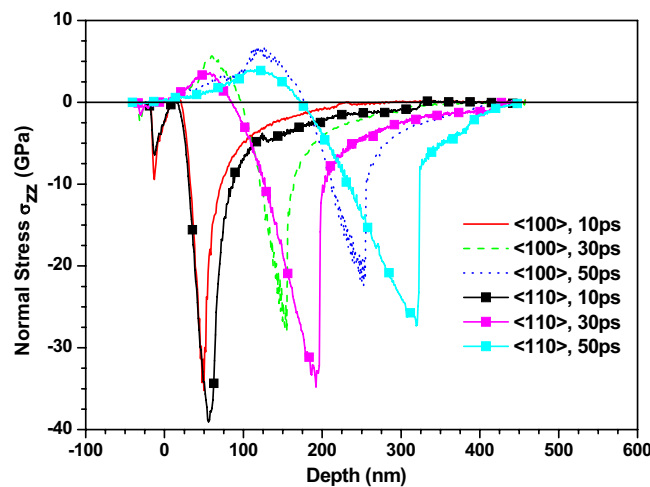


Figure 7. Comparison of normal stress (σ_{zz}) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065J/cm^2 at 10–50 ps time instant.

According to the theory of continuum mechanics²⁶, the elastic wave speed is calculated by

$$V_e = \sqrt{\frac{E(1-v)}{(1+v)(1-2v)\rho}} \quad (10)$$

Here v is the Poisson ratio in the thickness direction. From Fig. 6, the elastic modulus of $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientation is estimated to be approximately 264 GPa and 150 GPa, respectively, being in good agreement with the experimental data 237.6 GPa and 168.4 GPa²⁷. The Poisson ratio in the thickness direction (z -direction) is calculated by the following equation:

$$v = \frac{1}{2} \left(-\frac{\partial \varepsilon_x}{\partial \varepsilon_z} - \frac{\partial \varepsilon_y}{\partial \varepsilon_z} \right) \quad (11)$$

where ε_x , ε_y and ε_z are the engineering strain in the x -, y - and z - directions, respectively.

Based on the above equation, the Poisson ratio are calculated, which is about 0.355 and 0.313 for the $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ crystal orientations, respectively. Here the density of copper is 8954kg/m^3 and assumed to be orientation-independent. As a results, the elastic wave speed for the $\langle 110 \rangle$ crystal orientation is about 6400 m/s, which is about 0.25 times higher than that (5200 m/s) in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ crystal orientation. From Fig. 5, the propagation speed of stress wave is estimated to be about 6600 m/s for $\langle 110 \rangle$ crystal orientation, which is about 35% higher than the value of its $\langle 100 \rangle$ counterpart. This discrepancy of elastic wave speed between theoretical

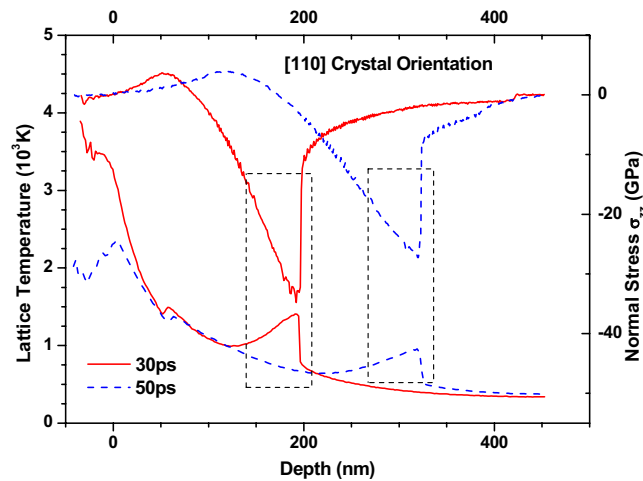


Figure 8. The contrast of spatial distributions of lattice temperature and normal stress (σ_{zz}) in 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 10–50 ps time instant.

prediction and the results of MD simulation can be attributed to the temperature-dependent elastic modulus and Poisson ratio together with the difference of mass density at the high temperature.

To show the effect of crystal orientation on the stress in thin film more accurately and clearly, we compare the stress in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films in Fig. 7. The normal stress in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film is found to be much higher than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. The distance between trough positions of normal stress wave in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films is 48 nm at 30 ps and then increases to 90 nm at 50 ps, which is in good agreement with the difference (about 1600 m/s) between propagation speeds of the normal stress waves in these two crystal orientations. This proves again that the crystal orientation has significant effect on the stress of thin film.

An interesting phenomenon observed in the previous discussion is the bump in the curve of lattice temperature due to the thermo-mechanical coupling in the thin film. To present the coupling interaction between temperature and stress clearly, the spatial distributions of lattice temperature together with the normal stress in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films are shown in Fig. 8. From Fig. 8, the trough position of normal stress wave is in coincidence with the position of bump of the lattice temperature, which agrees with the existing studies^{8,9}.

Effect of Crystal Orientation on Femtosecond Laser-Induced Spallation Behaviors. To demonstrate the effect of crystal orientation on the femtosecond laser-induced spallation behaviors of thin copper films, the snapshots of atomic configuration in the $\langle 100 \rangle$, $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 are provided in Figs 9–14. In these figures the atoms are colored according to their centro-symmetry parameters. The centro-symmetry parameter²⁸ is calculated as follows:

$$CSP = \sum_{i=1}^{N/2} |\vec{R}_i + \vec{R}_{i+N/2}|^2 \quad (12)$$

where \vec{R}_i and $\vec{R}_{i+N/2}$ are the vectors from the central atom to a particular pair of nearest neighbors. The centro-symmetry parameter (CSP), which is a useful parameter to measure the local lattice disorder around an atom for solid-state systems, is used to determine whether the atom is a part of a perfect lattice or a local defect (e.g. a dislocation or stacking fault). For the atoms in a perfect lattice, the centro-symmetry parameter is zero. At a local defect the parameter is a larger positive value as the symmetry is broken. For example, the value of the centro-symmetry parameter is 0.5–4.0 for partial dislocations, while 4.0–20 for stacking faults.

It is worth pointing out that for the MD systems with smaller lateral dimensions (such as $5 \text{ nm} \times 5 \text{ nm}$), the spallation behaviors show discernible difference from that with larger lateral dimension (such as $15 \text{ nm} \times 15 \text{ nm}$ used in the present study). However, when the lateral dimension is relatively large, the spallation behaviors seem be almost independent with the lateral dimension by making comparison between results of two cases of $15 \text{ nm} \times 15 \text{ nm}$ and $45 \text{ nm} \times 45 \text{ nm}$. This is due to the fact that the laser-induced nanovoid interacts with itself across the periodic boundaries owing to smaller lateral dimension²⁹. Thus, it is necessary to adopt a relatively large lateral dimension for investigating the femtosecond laser-induced spallation behavior of copper film.

The snapshots of $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film shown in Fig. 9 illustrate femtosecond laser-induced atomic spallation behaviors near the irradiated surface. The irradiated surface region begins to melt after femtosecond laser irradiation. As a result, many nanovoids with diameter size of 0.1–1 nm are formed in the 0–20 nm part at 10 ps. As time goes on, the melting zone gradually spreads toward depth of film and the nanovoids rapidly gather to form larger voids whose sizes are more than 10 nm. An interesting phenomenon is that the maximum value of the melting depth is about 50 nm at 80 ps in Fig. 9, which is consistent with the prediction based on the lattice temperature shown in Fig. 2. Meanwhile, with the increase of time, the large voids gradually grow by means of aggregation of nanovoids.

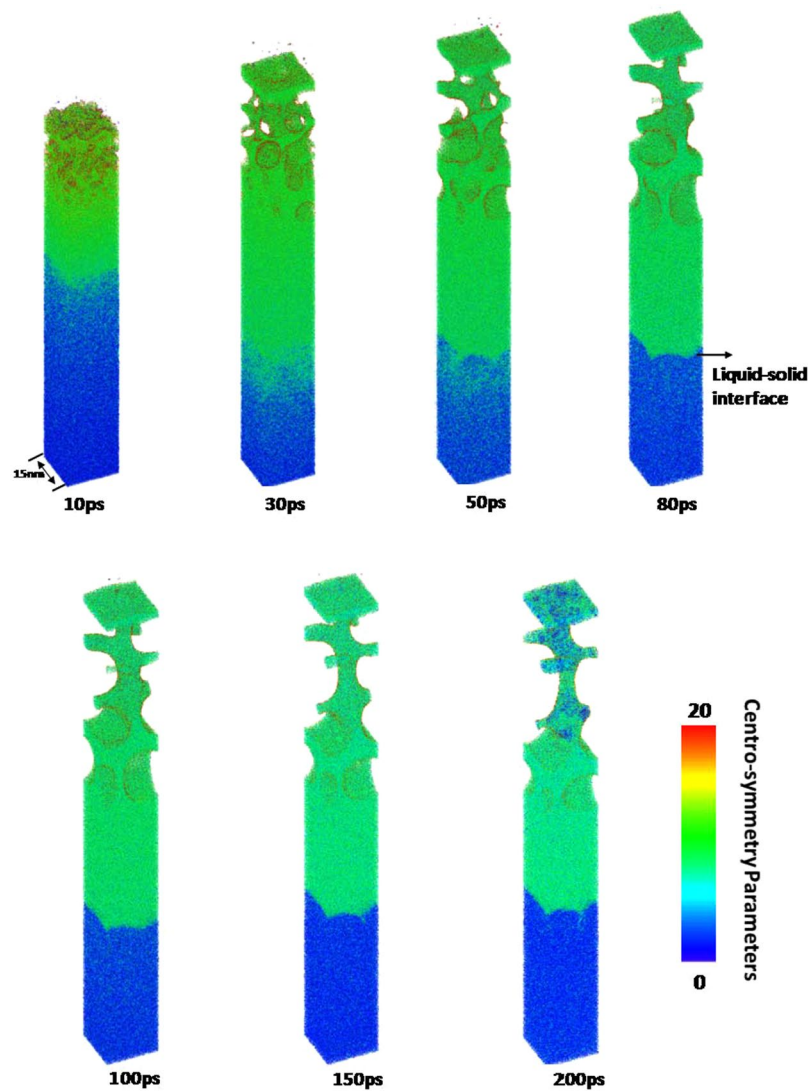


Figure 9. Snapshots of atomic configuration in the 0–100 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 10–200 ps time instant. The atoms are colored according to their centro-symmetry parameters.

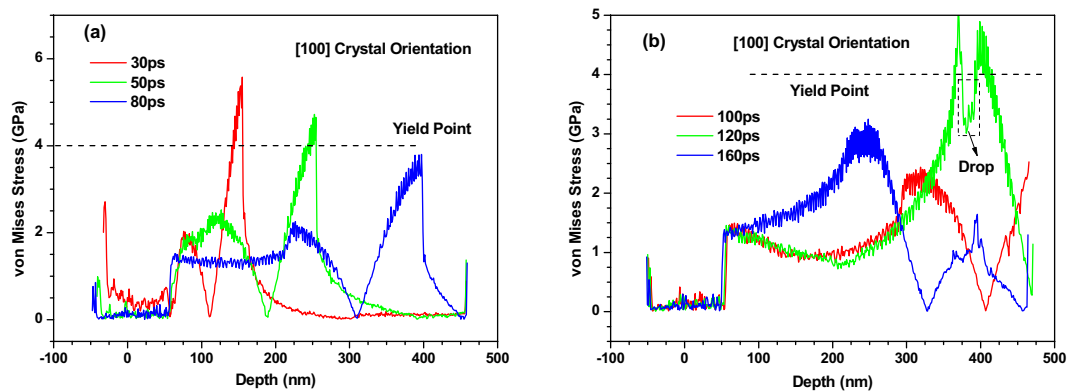


Figure 10. Equivalent stress (von Mises) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 30–160 ps time instant.

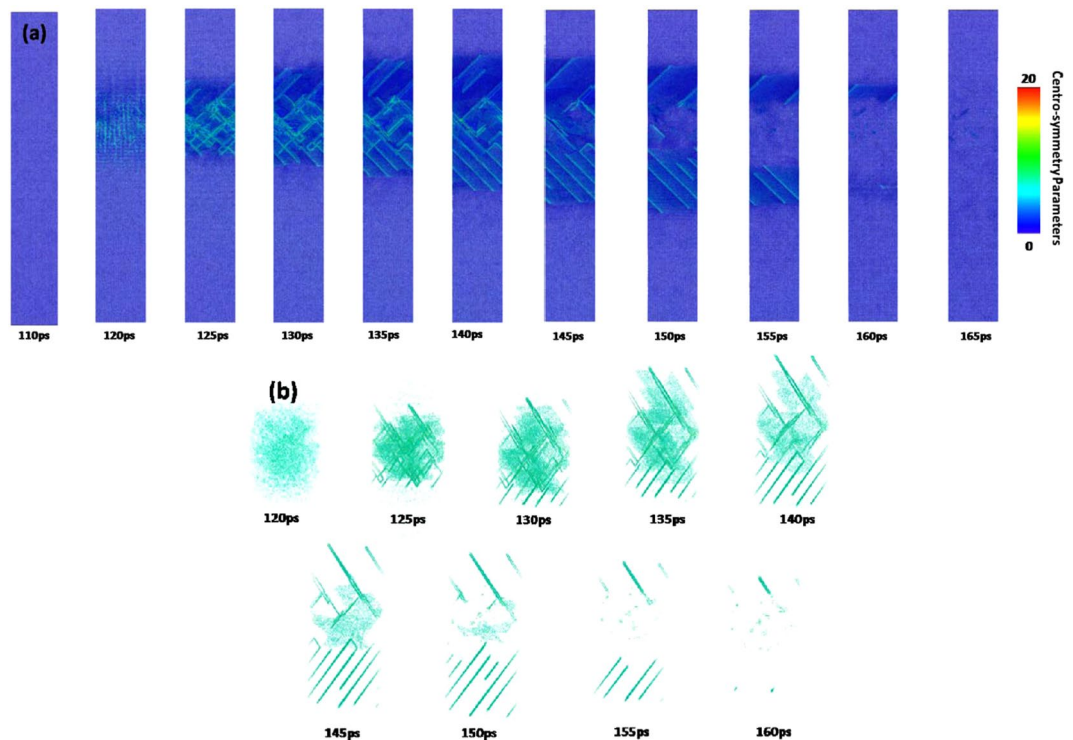


Figure 11. Snapshots of atomic configuration in the 350–450 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 110–165 ps time instant. The atoms are colored according to their centro-symmetry parameters, (a) $0 < \text{CSP} < 20$, (b) $\text{CSP} > 4$.

In the whole femtosecond laser-induced process (0–0.2 ns), there is no any dislocation nucleation at the solid-liquid interface as shown in Fig. 9. For the three-dimensional stress state, the von Mises stress yield criterion³⁰ can be used to reveal the mechanical mechanism of this phenomenon. The von Mises stress (equivalent stress) is given by

$$\sigma_{\text{Mises}} = \sqrt{[(\sigma_1 - \sigma_2)^2 + (\sigma_2 - \sigma_3)^2 + (\sigma_3 - \sigma_1)^2] / \sqrt{2}} \quad (13)$$

where σ_1 , σ_2 and σ_3 denotes σ_{zz} , σ_{xx} and σ_{yy} respectively according to the stress state in the present work. Figure 10 shows equivalent stress (von Mises) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 30–160 ps. Before 80 ps the equivalent stress in most of the whole film is less than the yield stress of copper (about 3.5–4.0 GPa)³¹. Moreover, the region where the equivalent stress is larger than yield stress is still too small to form dislocation nucleation. These can be used to explain the phenomenon shown in Fig. 9.

It is worth noting that the stress cannot be released due to the fact that the dislocation dose not nucleate in thin film. The value of equivalent stress shown in Fig. 10 dose not vary dramatically from 30 ps to 80 ps. This result is quite different from the result that will be illustrated in the following $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films.

After 100 ps, the equivalent stress in the non-irradiated surface region sharply increases due to the boundary reflection and reaches to yield stress of copper at 120 ps. In Fig. 11, the dislocation nucleates in the 350–450 nm part at 120 ps and a number of slip bands are formed accordingly. Meanwhile, a very interesting phenomenon occurs correspondingly, i.e., the equivalent stress of this region drops sharply due to dislocation nucleation (see Fig. 10).

However, the severe plastic deformation does not appear in the 350–450 nm part of $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film. Therefore, when the equivalent stress decreases after 140 ps and is less than yield stress of copper as shown in Fig. 10, the slip band in the 350–400 nm part disappears gradually as shown in Fig. 11(a). From Fig. 11(b), the whole process of evolution of the slip band due to mechanical stress can be distinctly observed.

Figure 12 shows the snapshots of $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film from 10 ps to 200 ps. All kinds of phenomena occurred in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film is also observed in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film. However, the spallation behaviors of the $\langle 100 \rangle$ and $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films show significant differences. For instance, the maximum melting depth of $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film reaches 60 nm which is 20% larger than that of $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. Moreover, the ablated surface region is found to quickly fly away from the $\langle 110 \rangle$ film substrate. In addition, dislocations nucleate and propagate at the liquid-solid interface at about 30 ps which form the slip band. The number of slip bands increases before 100 ps and then decreases. The equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film are shown in Fig. 13. The length of $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film whose equivalent stress is larger than yield stress of copper can be up to 120 nm, which is sufficient to make dislocation nucleation and propagation. Thus, many slip bands are formed in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper

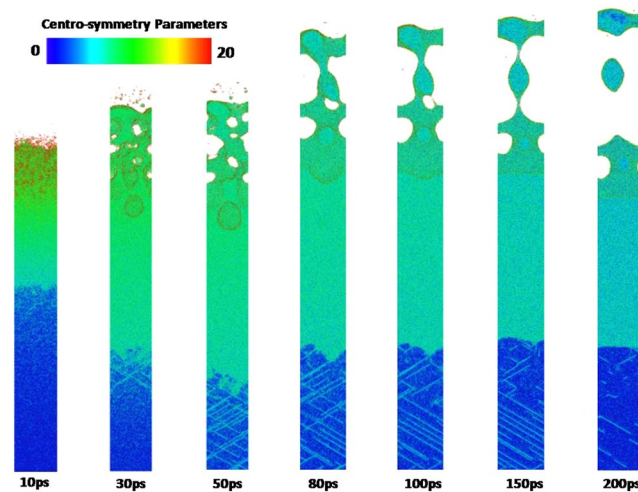


Figure 12. Snapshots of atomic centro-symmetry parameter in the 0–100 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 10–200 ps time instant. The atoms are colored according to their centro-symmetry parameters.

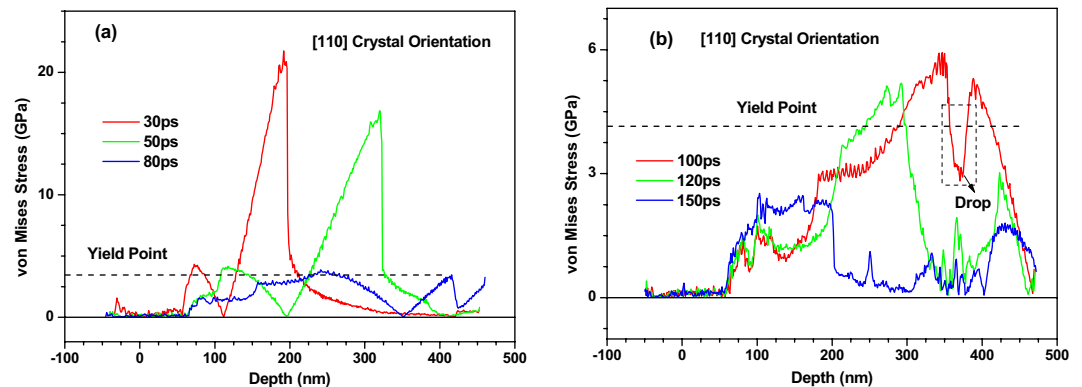


Figure 13. Equivalent stress (von Mises) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 30–150 ps time instant.

film. However, the equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the 0–150 nm part of $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film decrease and become less than yield stress of copper after 100 ps which results in the decrease of the number of slip bands.

From the equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the 320–420 nm part of $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film shown in Fig. 13, dislocation nucleation and generation of slip band can be expected. The snapshots of atomic conformation in the 320–420 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 are presented in Fig. 14(a). As expected, many slip bands are formed and the large plastic deformation appears in this region, which further evolves into nano-cracks and void with the increase of time. These nano-cracks and void do not disappear with the decrease of equivalent stress in this region. From Fig. 14(b), it can be clearly observed that nano-cracks (or nano-voids) gradually grow as time goes on.

Compared with the equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film shown in Fig. 10, the equivalent stress (von Mises) in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film falls sharply from 50 ps to 80 ps. The reason is that a large number of dislocation nucleation in this region makes the stress be released. Similarly, this also can explain why there is a sudden drop in the value of equivalent stress (von Mises) in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film from 100 ps to 150 ps.

The snapshots of atomic configuration and the equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film are shown in Figs 15–17, respectively. The spallation behaviors occurred in the $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film are very similar to that observed in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film e.g., the maximum melting depth of $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film is also about 60 nm, and the ablated surface region quickly flies away from the $\langle 111 \rangle$ film substrate. Dislocations nucleation and the slip bands occur at the liquid-solid interface to make the stress in the copper film be released. As a result, there is a distinct drop of the equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the 0–150 nm part of $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film at 80 ps shown in Fig. 16.

However, the plastic deformation occurred in the 250–450 nm part of $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film are more severe compared with that in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film. As shown in Fig. 17, the fracture of the $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film appears. Meanwhile, the equivalent stress (von Mises) in this region at 100 ps sharply falls as shown in Fig. 16.

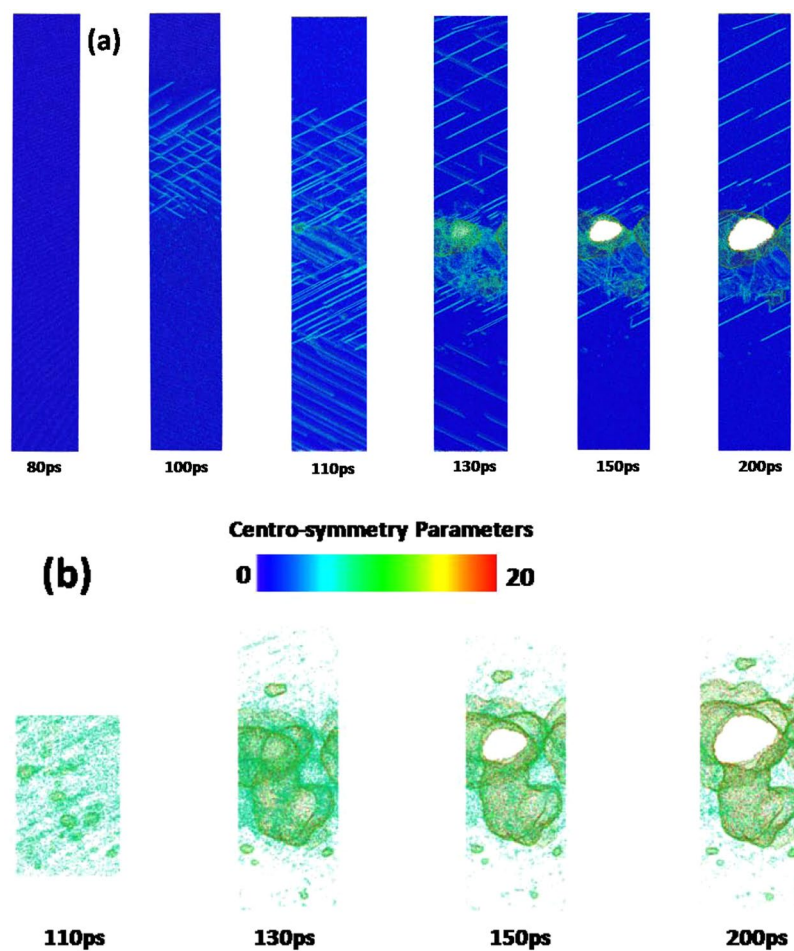


Figure 14. Snapshots of atomic centro-symmetry parameter in the 320–420 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 80–150 ps time instant. The atoms are colored according to their centro-symmetry parameters, (a) $0 < \text{CSP} < 20$, (b) $\text{CSP} > 4$.

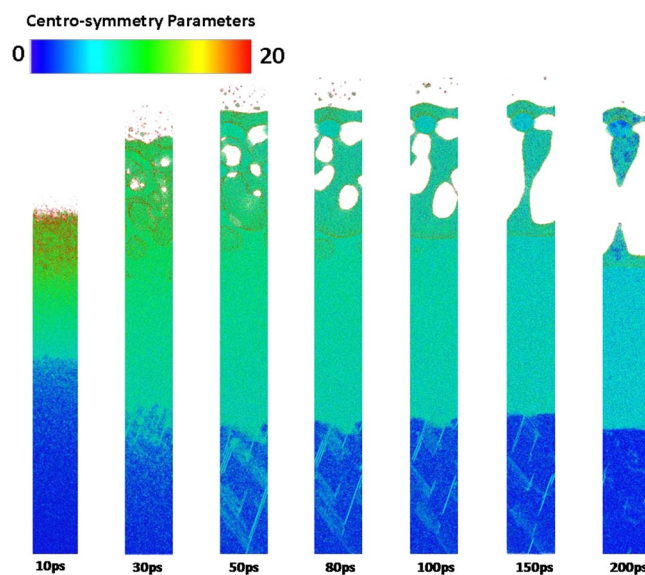


Figure 15. Snapshots of atomic centro-symmetry parameter in the 0–100 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 10–200 ps time instant.

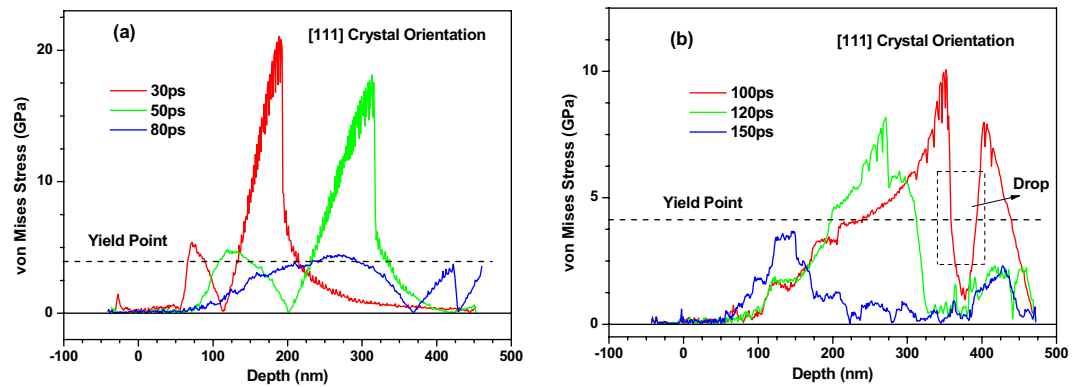


Figure 16. Equivalent stress (von Mises) distribution of 450 nm $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 30–150 ps time instant.

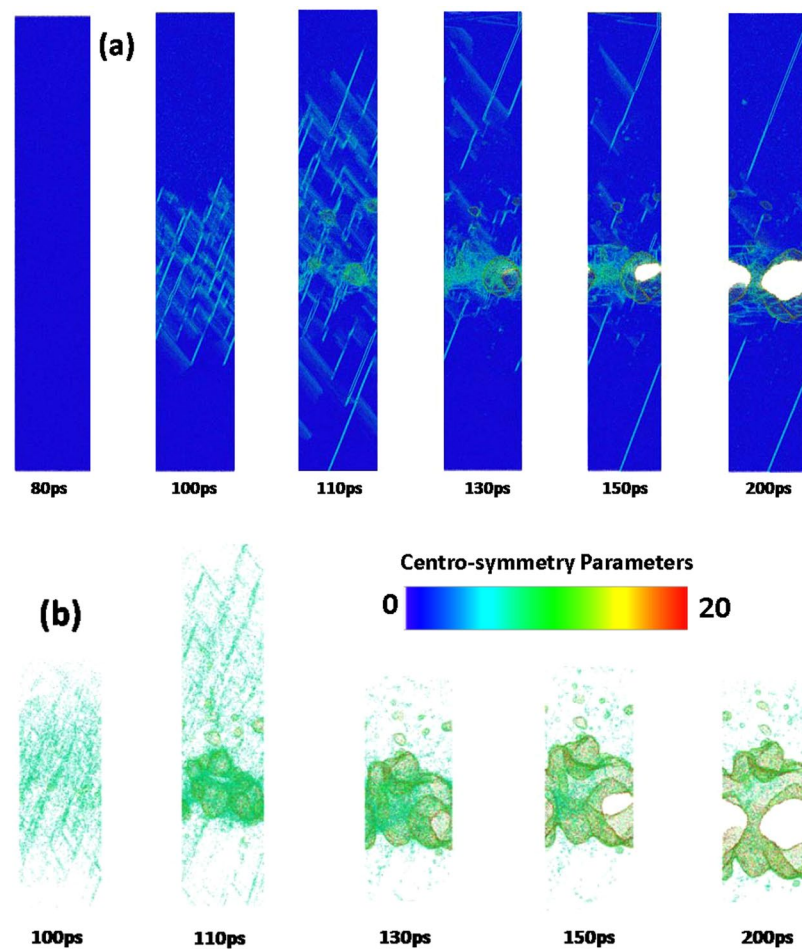


Figure 17. Snapshots of atomic centro-symmetry parameter in the 320–420 nm part of 450 nm $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film under an absorbed laser intensity of 0.065 J/cm^2 at 80–150 ps time instant. The atoms are colored according to their centro-symmetry parameters, (a) $0 < \text{CSP} < 20$, (b) $\text{CSP} > 4$.

Compared with the equivalent stresses (von Mises) in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film shown in Fig. 10, the equivalent stress (von Mises) in the $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper film shown in Fig. 16 falls sharply from 50 ps to 80 ps within the 0–150 nm zone and from 100 ps to 150 ps within the 250–450 nm zone due to a large number of dislocation nucleation in this region.

Conclusions

Monocrystal copper films with $\langle 100 \rangle$, $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ crystal orientations along the thickness direction are adopted to investigate the influence of crystal orientation on ultrafast thermo-mechanical responses and spallation behaviors based on MDS. The results are summarized as follows:

- 1) The crystal orientation has a significant influence on femtosecond laser-induced thermo-mechanical responses. Different crystal orientations lead to distinct differences in physical parameters of thin films, such as Young modulus, which further results in the difference of stress in films. Due to thermo-mechanical coupling interaction, discrepancy between normal stresses in copper films leads to the distinct differences in lattice temperature. For instance, the magnitude and propagation speed of normal stress wave in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ copper film are much higher than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film.
- 2) The crystal orientation has a significant influence on femtosecond laser-induced spallation behaviors of copper films. The melting depth in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film is 50 nm and the melting part does not fly away from the shallow surface region, while the melting depth is 60 nm in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films and the melting parts can fly away from the surface, which indicates that it is more difficult to ablate $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film compared with $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films. Moreover, the sizes of voids generated in melting subsurface in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films are larger than that in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. The dislocation and slip band are formed and propagate from the solid-liquid interface in the $\langle 110 \rangle$ and $\langle 111 \rangle$ copper films, while these phenomena do not appear in the $\langle 100 \rangle$ copper film. In addition, many slip bands are generated in the non-irradiated surface region of copper films due to reflection of mechanical stress. These slip bands are developed into cracks (nanovoids), which further result in fracture of copper films.

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Acknowledgements

This study was supported by the National Science Foundation of China (11502085), the Natural Science Foundation of Hubei Province in China (Grant No. 2016CFB542) and the Fundamental Research Funds for the Central Universities (2016YXMS097).

Author Contributions

X.Q.L. designed the study and performed the calculations. X.Q.L., L.Z.H. and T.K. wrote the main manuscript text and reviewed the manuscript.

Additional Information

Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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